DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 244 075 CE 038 897

AUTHOR	Horrell, Sallie
TITLE	Bears and Butterflies: The Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester. Project POWER 1982-83.
INSTITUTION	Gloucester Community Education, VA.
SPONS AGENCY	Virginia State Dept. of Education, Richmond. Adult Education Service.
PUB DATE	83
NOTE	25p.; Document contains small type.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Basic Education; Adult Programs; *English (Second Language); *Literacy Education; Program Descriptions; Program Development; *Program Implementation; *Tutorial Programs; Tutoring; Volunteers; *Volunteer Training
IDENTIFIERS	310 Project; *Virginia (Gloucester County)

ABSTRACT

This booklet is a step-by-step explanation of how Gloucester County, Virginia, developed a solid and effective affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of America. It begins with a history of People Organized for Worthwhile Education of Residents (Project POWER). A discussion follows of the planning for this 1-year program for the development of a support base for a volunteer tutorial program for adults enrolled in the local adult basic education (ABE) or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program. The implementation of the two goals/thrusts of Project POWER is described: the establishment of a volunteer tutorial program to instruct adult ESL and ABE students to complement and improve the existing adult education program and the establishment of the Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester (LVG), an affiliate of the Literacy Volunteers of America. Future plans for LVG are identified. Appendixes include a time schedule for the project and answers to frequently asked questions about Project POWER. (YLB)

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BEARS AND BUTTERFLIES:

the literacy volunteers of gloucester

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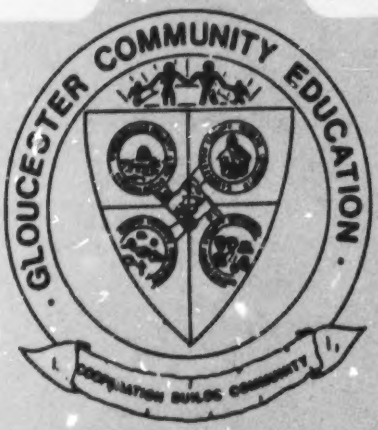

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PROJECT POWER 1982-83

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Community Education would like to thank the Virginia Department of Education, Adult Education Service for the initial funding that made Project POWER possible.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Introduction

This is the story of bears and butterflies, of ups and down, of ins and outs. It is the story of people dedicated to improving the quality of education of adults within their community. It is the story of adult students dedicated to improving their educational levels in order to become better able to work in their community. The events of the past year have been fun and frustrating, always interesting, and infinitely rewarding. Let's begin the story of Project P.O.W.E.R., People Organized for the Worthwhile Education of Residents.

History

Gloucester County's Adult Basic education has experienced dramatic increases in enrollment since the fall of 1980. From 1980-1981 23 adults participated in the program and the English as a Second Language Component was introduced. In 1981-1982 41 adults participated in both ABE and ESL classes. A teacher's aide was added to the program that year and ABE and ESL students began to meet separately. In 1982-1983, the enrollment jumped to 69 students in ABE and ESL.

Many factors contributed to this growth. In the fall of 1980, publicity of ABE and ESL classes improved as part of an effort to enhance the entire adult education program in the county. Four times a year the class was listed with other classes in the county's Community Education bulk mailing. As a result of continuous publicity, the level of participation increased. Another factor that contributed to increased enrollment has been the rescheduling of the class from changing locations to a

permanent site the Gloucester Intermediate School (the former high school). This school is on a major highway and easily accessible to students from all areas of the county. The third factor has been a conscious effort by administrators, the instructor, and the aide to respond to the needs of the adult students in order to keep them in class.

However, with these successful approaches came problems. How does a rural ABE program that is facing problems of increased enrollment with little chance for increased funding provide the educational services its adult population needs?

In 1980-81 an Adult Education Committee was formed to evaluate and make needed modifications in Gloucester County's Adult Education Program. This Committee was composed of representatives from Cooperative Extension, Parks and Recreation, Schools, and Community Education. It is chaired by private citizens. During the course of their discussions, one idea that surfaced many times was to develop a tutoring program for ABE students. The ABE instructor was approached to see if she felt a tutoring program to tie in with the ABE program would be beneficial to her students. She wholeheartedly supported the idea.

So here was the situation: First, a tutorial program would be of great value to the quality of instruction and student achievement in ABE. Secondly, a formal program of this sort would best be coordinated with the regular instructional program. Thirdly, this program would not likely be able to pay tutors for their work. What program could possibly meet the criteria for addressing these issues? Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA), seemed to provide the answers.

The Director of Community Education was directed by the Adult Education Committee, the County Community Education Advisory Council, and the General Supervisor of Secondary Education to explore the possibility of

development of a local affiliate of LVA. In reviewing alternative financial sources to seek assistance in implementing the program, the Adult Basic Education 310 Special Projects Grant Program surfaced. The Community Education Director was given the authority to draft a proposal for the purpose of developing a volunteer ABE tutorial project incorporating the processes required for establishment of a Gloucester affiliate of LVA The proposal was accepted and the local match for the 310 Project was provided by the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors as a support service to Gloucester Public Schools.

The Proposal

Project P.O.W.E.R. was a one-year plan for the development of two distinct yet complimentary groups to provide a support base for a volunteer tutorial program. The plan focused on adults who were enrolled in the local ABE or ESL program. The first group would consist of community volunteers willing to donate their time to one-to-one tutoring of the students. Objectives established to accomplish this were:

1. Recruit 25 volunteer tutors;
2. Provide training in adult literacy tutoring for volunteers;
3. Develop schedule of tutoring with volunteers and students;
4. Monitor program throughout the year;
5. Evaluate program effectiveness; and
6. Make needed modifications for future programs.

A second thrust of Project P.O.W.E.R. would be to recruit and train at least ten community leaders with the expressed intent of becoming the Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester. Objectives to accomplish this included:

1. Recruit 10 volunteers from the community to form a Steering

Committee for LVG;

2. Define specific roles for LVG; and
3. Evolve the Steering Committee into an official Board of Directors and complete required tasks for meeting LVA affiliate status standards with fiscal independancy and self direction.

These goals and objectives set the direction of Project P.O.W.E.R. They were the plan of action.

The next step was the selection of a Project Director. The ABE instructor who had been involved in the project from its beginning agreed to accept the position. She spent part of the summer reading manuals, handbooks and other literature in order to better understand the LVA program. In addition, she attended a training session led by Dale Marlin (Director of Literacy Volunteers of Virginia), and Cynthia Flintom (Assistant Director). This was followed by actual attendance and participation in an ESL workshop led by the Peninsula Literacy Council using LVA materials.

The administrative structure behind Project P.O.W.E.R. is a unique feature of this program. Project P.O.W.E.R. has been under the direction of the Department of Community Education which is a separate department of county government. Community Education, while holding primary responsibility for the administrative supervision of the Adult Education Program, is not directly funded through the public school budget.

The Director of Community Education reports to the County Administrator and is responsible to the General Supervisor of Secondary Education for all Adult Education services. The Community Education Advisory Council, the Community Resources (Interagency) Council, and the Adult Education Committee provide advisory input for the Department on a

monthly basis.

The Project P.O.W.E.R. Director was hired by the Community Education Office. As ABE teacher, she participated in both sides of the program--provider of tutorial services and receiver of tutorial services. The ABE/ESL aide participated in the workshops and became a qualified LVA workshop trainer. The participation of both the ABE teacher and aide in the tutorial program provided continuity for students, tutors, and the Steering Committee.

The Gloucester County Board of Supervisors acted as fiscal agent for Project P.O.W.E.R. through the Community Education Department. Reports on the Project were regularly made to the County Administrator and the General Supervisor of Secondary Education.

With the needs defined and the plan outlined, with funds provided and administrative structure established, it was now time for the Project Director to begin to implement the program.

The Tutorial Program (Goal 1)

The first goal of Project P.O.W.E.R. was the establishment of a volunteer tutorial program to instruct adult ESL and ABE students to compliment and improve the existing adult education program. A general appeal for volunteer tutors began in the fall in preparation for the first LVA Basic Reading Workshop November 8-9, 1982. This appeal was made through newspaper articles in the local paper, letters to community leaders, speeches by the Project Director at several community organizations, an article in the Community Education quarterly newspaper, and a radio spot. Once interest was generated, a special meeting was set for November 1, 1982

The purpose of the meeting was to gather together those who had

indicated interest in the program and to explain to them the structure of LVA and the plans for the first workshop. The Project Director prepared the agenda for the hour-long program. She made posters, gathered supplies, and telephoned everyone who had called the Community Education Office about the program. Unfortunately, the meeting was not well attended and the Project Director went through the entire agenda in 30 minutes. However, at the end of the program several people did sign up for the workshop. *Lessons #1 and #2 - A well-planned publicity campaign is important. Over plan an agenda - it doesn't take as much time to make a speech as you think it will.*

As a result of this meeting and the other publicity appeals, a tentative list of 14 names was drawn up for the first workshop and representatives from Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR) in Richmond were invited to attend the Basic Reading Workshop. Dale Marlin and Cynthia Flintom were workshop leaders. The Project Director and the Community Education Office handled the technical details. The workshop was held in a classroom at Abingdon Rescue Squad. Lunches were arranged with the two local delicatessens.

The workshop began at 10:00 Monday morning with only 10 of the 14 local people attending. Four members of OAR attended. *Lesson #3 - Set your attendance goal of 15-20 but sign up a few extras.*

The workshop ran from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday and 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tuesday. It was fast-paced and a bit overwhelming for several of the tutors with non-teaching backgrounds, but the enthusiasm and excitement of the tutors as they participated in the program was exceptional. Several tutors were so interested in the program that they decided to become involved in Board Training.

The basic LVA program is well-grounded in educational theory and

well organized for presentation to groups of 15-20 adults. The format is simple: a slide/tape presentation of a particular area of reading instruction followed by a demonstration by the workshop leaders and then small group practice sessions. The material is presented logically and covers approximately 15 hours of instructional time. These can be set up in several 3-3½ hour sessions or 2 full-day sessions. The 2-day format is overwhelming to some, and a follow-up evening session was included to give tutors extra practice time with testing materials. The tutors were assigned students during the follow-up session.

Recruitment for the workshop of ESL tutors was made easier by the enthusiasm of the first group of tutors. In addition, newspaper articles and phone calls to organizations sponsoring refugees resulted in 16 tutors attending the two-day workshop February 28 - March 1, 1983. This workshop was held in the Parish House of Abingdon Episcopal Church and was led by the Project Director. Again the tutors were delighted with the format of the workshop: slide/tape presentation, workshop leader demonstration, tutor practice session. Again tutors felt that too much material was covered in two days. The follow-up session for this group was an invitation to attend an ESL class. Tutors met the students and observed the ESL teacher and aide using techniques from the workshop. Students and tutors enjoyed this session. That evening students were assigned to their tutors.

Recruitment for the third workshop was not well-planned. The workshop dates May 16-18 were set only a month before the workshop began. During that month the Project Director was involved in plans for the Statewide Literacy Conference in Waynesboro and in other project activities. Only four tutors participated in the workshop. *Lesson #4 - Allow yourself adequate time to prepare for and to publicize the workshops.*

Two other tutors were trained to be workshop leaders during this workshop.

Recruiting students for the tutors was not a problem. Students enrolled in ABE and ESL classes were given the first opportunity to receive the services of a tutor. The students were informed of the program by the ABE teacher (the Project Director). This gave the students additional confidence in the program and overcame some of their reluctance to accept tutoring from "strangers". Several problems arose. Many adult students felt that they could not devote any more time to studies outside regular ABE/ESL classes. Therefore the number of students interested in the tutoring program was much lower than had been anticipated. However, other students were easily found. Students who had dropped out of ABE or ESL class for various reasons were contacted. Several of these students were delighted to work with tutors. Other students had wives at home who were unable to attend regular classes. They requested tutors for them. Finally, because of publicity about the program, several people from the community called to seek help for family members or friends. These requests were met as much as possible. Very shortly, a waiting list of students developed.

Scheduling was a bear! Because the workshops were held during the day, the tutors were more likely to have days free for tutoring while most ABE/ESL students worked during the day and had only evenings free for tutoring. Another difficulty occurred when tutors and students needed to be matched according to area of residence. Gloucester County is 28 miles long and 15 miles wide at its widest point. Many tutors and students drove substantial distances to meet. Finding places to meet was another difficulty. Gloucester County does not have a public library facility suitable for tutoring sessions. There was some space available

in the County Court House Building and two schools were open several evenings during the week. Most students and tutors are meeting in homes, at schools, or in churches.

Once actual tutoring sessions began, the next phase of the Project began: managing the program. There were two areas of management for the Project Director. First of all, regular contact with the tutors needed to be maintained. Tutors called the Project Director often, and the Project Director often called them. Problems encountered by tutors included: 1) students did not show up regularly or found excuses to not meet frequently; 2) the LVA methods had to be adapted to meet individual needs so tutors needed some guidance; 3) tutors could not find convenient locations for classes; and 4) tutors needed reading materials. A monthly tutor meeting was scheduled at the suggestion of the tutors to discuss problems and share ideas. The Project Director conducted these meetings.

As ABE and ESL teacher, the Project Director was able to keep in touch with students regularly. Most students who began tutoring felt very positive about the program. Several students began to meet with tutors but had to discontinue because of changes in job schedules or because of family situations. Problems encountered by ESL students, in addition to problems already mentioned, included difficulty understanding meeting times and places.

Evaluation was built into the Project P.O.W.E.R. objectives. Student achievement rates would be studied. A quarterly review of student achievement was to begin in December of 1982. This would measure overall increases or decreases in learning rates of students. This segment of Project P.O.W.E.R. was not achieved. Most of our tutors and students for the first workshop (Nov. 8-9) did not begin regular tutoring sessions until late November or even as late as January. Other workshops were held

February 28 - March 1 and May 16 and 17. A quarterly review of student progress was not maintained for these students. ABE testing materials ordered for the fall were not received for the year. Although LVA provides testing materials for the tutors, it suggests that six months elapse before students are re-tested. Several tutors who began the program in November-January were able to re-test students as an indicator of student achievement. But tutors who began to work March-May were not able to do this.

Attitude surveys for students, tutors, and the ABE/ESL teacher and aide were prepared at the end of the program. The Project Director was able to summarize the information to make recommendations for future programs. All workshop participants completed evaluations of the LVA workshop material at the conclusion of each workshop. This material was also studied.

Several other expectations were outlined in the Project proposal to indicate success or failure of the program. We expected student attrition rates to decrease. A comparison was made of the number of students who remained in the program until the end of the school year for the past three years. Seven out of 23 students were attending ABE and ESL classes at the end of 1980-1981. Seventeen out of 41 students were in the program at the end of 1981-1982. This past year 17 out of 69 students were still in class at the end of the school year. Student attrition rates in ABE/ESL classes are influenced by factors that are unrelated to tutoring such as changes in job schedules, family problems, and health problems. Some students were able to attend the ABE/ESL class and the tutoring sessions without difficulty. Some students stopped attending class but continued to work with tutors. A few students had to discontinue both programs.

We also expected to find that tutored students would attend class for more hours than non-tutored students. Again other factors not related to tutoring influenced the number of hours a student attended class. We were not able to measure the effects of tutoring in this area.

Success of the tutoring must be measured by its effects on the individuals who were tutored. When students worked faithfully with tutors, that was success. When students commented during ABE and ESL classes that their tutors were helping them keep up with class work, that was success. When more students began to request the help of tutors, that was success. These were the butterflies, the moments of pure delight in the program, moments that could not be pinned down in measurable terms.

The Literacy Volunteer Affiliate (Goal 2)

The second goal of Project P.O.W.E.R. was the establishment of the group known as Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester (LVG), an affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., prior to July 1, 1983.

The recruitment of Board members began in October 1982 in the general media campaign. Letters about the project were sent to community leaders and were followed up by a telephone call from the Project Director. Several people attended the orientation session Nov. 1 and indicated interest in helping set up the program. In addition, several tutors from the first workshop expressed an interest in the group.

This group of individuals was invited to attend an LVA Board Training session led by Dale Marlin and Cynthia Flintom Nov. 10. One major outcome of the meeting was a pool of names of Gloucester citizens who were possibly interested in becoming involved in the project. These people were to be contacted by those individuals present at the training session.

The first meeting for volunteers interested in becoming the Steering Committee was held November 22. The Project Director led the entire session in which goals and objectives of Project P.O.W.E.R. were outlined and the LVA program was described. The program was well received but no commitments were made that evening. However, the group agreed to participate in a training session led by Dr. Steve Parson of VPI & SU on group goal and objective setting and effective board training. This session was held December 14.

With all of this training and preparation behind them, the members of Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester met January 20, 1983, with Del Highfield, Community Education Director, presiding. He helped the group through a goal and objective setting process. The mission statement for Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester was determined to be, "TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION LEVEL AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN GLOUCESTER COUNTY BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF ILLITERATE ADULTS AND INCREASING THE LITERACY OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING CITIZENS."

The group then set its goals. They were:

1. To strengthen the tutorial program for Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language students by developing a quality support system for volunteers and students;
2. To raise the awareness of Gloucester County residents of the illiteracy problem by informing the general public about Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester and developing widespread interest in our efforts;
3. To improve the efforts of the Adult Education opportunities in Gloucester County by identifying and recruiting adults who need basic skill development including non-English speakers;
4. To ensure the effective delivery of service from Literacy Volun-

teers of Gloucester by gaining the financial support from the community necessary for operations of the organization;

5. To recruit, train, and coordinate volunteer tutors for Adult Basic and English as a Second Language students and other needy individuals; and
6. To regularly improve the efforts of Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester by developing a planned approach for evaluation of the organization.

Once goals were established, the group began to set objectives. The first goal to be discussed was the goal concerning public awareness of the program. The group broke into small groups to discuss objectives for meeting the goal. Then as a whole group, the members discussed their ideas and developed the objectives. Some of the objectives for Goal #2 were:

* To select a temporary publicity chairman as soon as possible to coordinate public information;
* To develop a list of speakers from the Committee who would make contacts with service groups and speak with those groups about LVG; and
* To develop posters about LVG to be distributed around the County.

Once the objectives were set for a particular goal, a member of the group was selected to head that area. This objective-setting process continued from February until May. As roles were assigned, LVG members began to assume more responsibilities within the organization.

While the Steering Committee was organizing and while tutors and students began working together, the Project Director and Community Education Director were working toward the completion of prerequisites

for Provisional affiliate status for LVG based on LVA guidelines. The application was completed and Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester became a provisional affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., March 28, 1983.

Several Steering Committee members attended a Literacy Volunteers of Virginia Board meeting in Staunton, Va. in January. Other Committee members attended the Statewide Literacy Conference in Waynesboro in May. Attendance at these state meetings heightened the members' interest in the program.

Criteria for evaluating this part of the project included:

a. Whether or not ten committed volunteers were recruited to form a Steering Committee;

b. Whether or not specific roles for the LVG were defined; and

c. Whether or not the LVG Board of Directors became a self-directed affiliate of LVA providing general direction to Project P.O.W.E.R.

Near the end of the year, the Board of Directors will be asked to do an extensive subjective analysis of the staff, tutors, ABE and ESL program, and themselves. This will be done on an individual basis and the Project P.O.W.E.R. Director will synthesize the information into a final report accompanying the previously discussed evaluations. The group will then study this final report and make recommendations.

Future Plans

Much of the work for Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester has been outlined in the goals and objectives that the organization has established during the past year. In July officers will be elected to serve for one year. Immediate attention of the group will be focused on objective setting for the goals of student recruitment, development of a support sys-

tem for tutors, and a planned approach for evaluation of the organization. A request for a Basic Reading Workshop in August will be considered.

LVG will continue its ties with the ABE/ESL program to provide tutors for students enrolled in the classes. In addition, the group will be involved in providing tutoring services to anyone in the community who needs help. The committee will seek to maintain contact with tutors at planned social gatherings throughout the year and to encourage tutors to attend LVG meetings. Strong ties to the state organization will be maintained since one of our members will be serving on the LVV Board of Directors. Tutors and LVG members will be encouraged to participate in state and national literacy conferences.

The Finance Committee has a tremendous job ahead as it outlines the objectives needed to carry out the program. A budget has been adopted. A list of potential contributors has been developed but needs to be expanded.

Tutor meetings will be held regularly with plans being made to invite outside speakers from related fields to meet with tutors. Problems and helpful ideas will be shared by tutors. The library will develop a source of reading materials for tutors and students. Tutor training workshops will be scheduled four times and more workshop leaders will be trained.

Publicity efforts will continue with more newspaper, radio, and television coverage. The group will plan to develop a newsletter, a pamphlet about the local program, and flyers for distribution throughout the county. The Speakers Committee will continue to look for opportunities to tell groups about the program.

This will be a year of growth and development, a year of bears and

butterflies, a year of excitement as Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester becomes a self-directed affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of America.

Appendix

TIME SCHEDULE FOR PROJECT P.O.W.E.R.

(July 1, 1982 - June 30, 1983)

July - August	Project Director studies materials from Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.
September 1	Project Director attends Board Training meeting with Literacy Volunteers of Virginia.
September 14, 16, 21, 22	Project Director participates in ESL workshop led by members of Peninsula Literacy Council using LVA materials.
September - October	Begin publicity campaign (radio spots, feature article in newspaper, public service announcements in newspaper, letters to potential Steering Committee members, elementary school bulletins, articles in bulk mailings, talks to clubs and organizations.
November 1	First meeting held for everyone interested in Literacy Volunteer program.
November 8-9	Literacy Volunteers of Virginia lead the first LVA Basic Reading Workshop.
November 10	LVV lead Steering Committee prospects in Board Training program.
November 22	First Steering Committee meeting of Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester is held.
Late November	Actual tutoring begins for ABE students.
December 14	Steering Committee meets with specialist from VPI & SU to focus on ways boards work effectively.
January 20	Steering Committee begins goal setting process. It determines its mission statement, six goals, and begins work.
February 10	Steering Committee begins to set objectives to accomplish each goal.
February 28 - March 1	Project Director leads first English as a Second Language Workshop.
March 12	LVG receives provisional affiliate status from LVA.
April 13	Finance Committee draws up budget for one year.

April 22	Two Steering Committee members appear on Morning Magazine, Channel 13, WVEC.
April 28	Letters written to clubs and organizations for Speakers Committee.
May 3	Project Director meets with tutors for discussion of problems and sharing of ideas.
May 9-10	Six Steering Committee members attend LVV Statewide Adult Literacy Conference in Waynesboro.
May 16-17	The second Basic Reading Workshop is held. Two volunteer workshop leaders are trained.
June 6	Evaluations given to tutors.
June	Students, ABE/ESL teacher, and teacher's aide receive evaluations.
June 21	Recognition program for ABE/ESL students, LVG members, and LVG tutors.
August 4	Project Director and Advisor report on Project P.O.W.E.R. at S.A.I.L. conference at O.D.U.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PROJECT P.O.W.E.R.

1. *Why have volunteer tutors when you can have paid ABE staff teach students?*

Very slow readers very often will not enroll in regular ABE classes because they are fearful of a classroom situation. If volunteer tutors work with these students one-to-one to build up reading skills and confidence, then the students will be more likely to enroll in classes later. In addition, adult education classes can become crowded. Tutors can provide slower students with additional one-to-one help on classwork.

2. *Can an adult education program develop a Literacy Volunteer program without a paid staff person?*

A tremendous amount of time and work is involved in the development of a Literacy Volunteer program. An organization, association or group of citizens could develop the program with adequate financial support. A paid staff person is not essential, but one person as a volunteer would have difficulty initiating a program of this size.

3. *Do you have problems finding students for tutors to help?*

Near the end of the first year of the program, we had a student waiting list. Students in ABE/ESL classes, former students of ABE/ESL classes, family members and friends of students, and people in the community are asking for tutors.

4. *What would you do differently for Project P.O.W.E.R. if you were to do it again?*

We would have paid more attention to establishing the Steering Committee and selecting officers. The financial plan needed to be developed earlier. The emphasis at the beginning was more on recruiting tutors for

ABE/ESL students. The emphasis should have been on the organization that is to support the tutoring program. However, our Steering Committee members are dedicated volunteers who will ensure the program will continue.

5. *Are the Literacy Volunteers of Gloucester here to stay?*

Yes!

PROJECT POWER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART